Dewan's reply.—You have spoken about several tanks and streams. Your suggestions will be forwarded to the Chief Engineer and he will see what can be done in the matter.

You say that the agricultural farm is located in a corner of your taluk. It is not so. It is situated within a mile of the main road from Shencottah to Quilon; it is in the centre of the taluk. If the people do not visit the farm as often as they should, it is not the fault of the Government; it is the fault of the people. We have instructed the Inspector to have wet cultivation also demonstrated in the farm. The Inspector is also going from place to place and instructing the people on improved methods of agriculture by means of demonstration on their own lands. Government have asked the Director of Agriculture to formulate a scheme for popularising agricultural farms by holding annual exhibitions therein, to which the people living in the neighbourhood may be invited to go with the best specimens of their own agricultural products and at which prices may be given to the best specimens.

50. Some wants of the land-holders of Shencottah taluk.

Mr. K. Sankaranarayana Aiyar B. A. (Member, Municipal Council, Shencottah) said that, subsequent to the passing of the Rules under the Irrigation Regulation in 1911, the minor irrigation works in the Shencottah taluk had been neglected, and urged the necessity of (1) ordering the immediate transfer of all minor irrigation works in the taluk to the charge of the local Tahsildar ; (2) sanctioning a separate annual allotment for those works ; and (3) appointing an officer not below the rank of a sub-overseer in theD. P. W. to assist the Tahsildar as *exofficio* irrigation officer in the execution of such works.

He next prayed that a committee consisting of the Tahsildar of the taluk and the D. P. W. Sub-division Officer, with two or three agriculturists in each *pakuthi* or group of *pakuthies* to assist them, be appointed to institute an enquiry into the reckless registration of all available space within the foreshore of the existing tanks for wet cultivation that had now been going on for the past several years.

He then pointed out that, although Shencottah shared the benefit of remissions on account of failure of crop along with the five taluks of the old Padmanabhapuram Division and certain taluks of the Trivandrum Division, it was denied that concession in regard to *tharisu* or fallow remission, and said that the reasons which held good for singling out certain *pakuthies* of Tovala and Agastisvaram for such remission applied with greater force to the *pakuthies* of Ayikudi, Klankad and Sampurvadakara. He prayed that such of the *pakuthies* in the taluk as deserved the benefit of fallow remission might be carefully selected and their names added to schedule II of the Remission Rules.

He next spoke on the subject of fodder and fuel reserves. He prayed that the tract of forest land known as "Pasukkada Theri" in the Puliyara Reserve near Kannupulli Chowkey and the hill-slope lying outside the boundary of that reserve might be set apart for cattle grazing, and urged that it should, on no account, be assigned for other purposes. He pointed out that there were no unreserved forest lands for extracting fuel, all such lands having been already brought under registry, and suggested that a portion of the reserved forest might be disafforested and converted into a fuel reserve, so that the people might cut and remove fuel from that reserve on obtaining passes from the Forest Department. If that was not feasible, the Member suggested that a fuel depôt might be established at Shencottah.

The Member's next representation was that the expression "temporarily settled land under direct engagement with the Government" in Article 1 of Schedule II of the Court Fees Regulation was misconstrued by the taluk authorities who thought that it referred to lands held on *kuthakapottom*. In the result, while the fee chargeable on an application or a petition when presented to any officer of the Land Revenue Department by a person holding temporarily settled land under direct engagement with the Government and when the subject matter of the application or petition related exclusively to such engagement was 2 chakrams according to Article 1

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of Schedule II of the Court Fees Regulation, the imposition of a fee of 8 annas was insisted upon by the Tahsildar under sub-clause 2 of clause (*b*) of Article 1 of that schedule, in the case of lands held on *kuthakapattam*. The Member urged that the imposition of a fee of 8 annas on such applications was wholly illegal.

Lastly, he submitted that the imposition of a fee of half a rupee on applications for copies of special records mentioned therein was insisted upon by the taluk officers under rule 3 of the rules regarding the grant of copies by the Land Revenue Department, passed by the Government. The above fee could be imposed only in cases where a search was necessary, while in the cases in which no such search was required, the imposition of the fee in question was not contemplated by the rules. He said that there were instances in which the maximum fee of Rs. 5 prescribed was exceeded in the case of applications for copies of special records, since a search fee of 8 annas was imposed in respect of each of such records. He said that it was a recurring hardship which called for immediate redress at the hands of the Government.

Dewan's reply.—The last two points mentioned by you, *viz.*, the improper levy of court fees, and fees for the grant of copies of records from revenue offices will be examined.

In regard to minor and petty irrigation works, there has been a want of system in the past. But I do not think that the remedy suggested by you, *viz.*, that of making the Tahsildar responsible for minor works, would answer the purpose. The Rules under the Irrigation Regulation are being revised and it is proposed to make the officers of the D. P. W. responsible for minor irrigation works. All these works, which relate to construction and repair, should be under one department, the activities of which should be regulated by one head, and I trust that, under the proposed arrangement, better attention will be devoted to minor irrigation works.

With regard to foreshore lands, of course, such lands should never have been registered. But, once the lands have been registered, to get them back by formal acquisition is a big proposition. I have seen some of these lands. They are very costly, and the amount of compensation payable will be very high. Lands within the foreshore are always held subject to the defect of submersion. They can be cultivated only as the water recedes. If in any case the owners of such lands let out water unauthorisedly, there is the remedy of the criminal law. I do not think that there is any justification for the acquisition of these lands.

In regard to fallow remission, I am sorry I have to give you a disappointing answer, because I think that the three *pakuthies* of Ayikudi, Klangad and Sampurvadakara receive the benefit of both the monsoons. If you do not raise a wet crop during the southwest monsoon season, you are expected to raise a dry crop, and I know that you do as a matter of fact raise it with profit. Remission cannot, therefore, be granted for fallows as a rule. In exceptional cases of drought, however, Government will see whether any special relief is called for.

In regard to the reservation of lands for grazing cattle you have plenty of reserves in the taluk. You want grazing lands scattered throughout the country. That is not possible and it has the additional disadvantage of indiscriminate mixture of cattle and the consequent spread of cattle diseases. The Revised Forest Rules permit the free grazing of Travancore cattle within reserves. If any forest officer refuses to admit your cattle in the face of the rules, you may appeal to the Conservator of Forests and get the needed redress.

With regard to the supply of fuel, there are fuel coupes in the taluk. Passes are issued for unreserves and a fee of 12 annas per cart load is charged. The fee is not much. There are some unreserved lands in the taluk. Fuel coupes are sold on contract. You may take up the contract yourself, keep the fuel required for local consumption, and export the rest. It is not possible to open a fuel depôt at Shencottah. The policy of the Government is to gradually abolish the sale of fuel by the

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department and leave the whole concern to private enterprise. Government do not want to resuscitate the old system unless there is any pressing necessity for it.

51. Needs of the people of Kuttanad in respect of agriculture and means of communication.

Mr. Krishna Aiyar Narayana Aiyar (Member, Ambalapuzha Taluk) began by thanking the Government for the attention paid to the improvement of *punja* cultivation in Kuttanad and stated that there were many more things to be done in the direction of helping the *punja* cultivators.

The Member stated that quicklime formed the chief manure in *punja* cultivation and the recent order of Government selling the right to collect quicklime from the backwaters had caused great hardship to the cultivators. He prayed that such indirect taxation on the people might be done away with.

The Member drew the attention of the Government to the fact that indigenous articles of manure were being freely exported from the State and suggested that a duty might be imposed on such articles. He then referred to a rumour that Government were going to grant monopolies in respect of river sand and earth on *porambokes* and added that, if that rumour was true, the progress of *punja* cultivation would be seriously retarded by the grant of such monopolies.

The next point urged by the Member was the want of irrigational facilities in North Travancore. The canals and other waterways in Kuttanad had already been encroached upon and it was, in the Member's opinion, necessary that a special irrigation engineer should be appointed for Kuttanad. He drew the attention of the Government to the need for opening a canal from Changanachery to Alleppey and a road from Tiruvalla to Ambalapuzha. He also complained that the road from Quilon to Alleppey was not receiving any attention.

The Member complained that the present rules regulating the grant of agricultural loans did not serve to help the poor ryots, and that an attempt to secure a loan involved a considerable amount of time, delay and expenditure. With a view to remove that evil the Member suggested the opening of agricultural banks. He then dwelt at length on the advantages of delivering lectures and holding exhibitions on agricultural subjects in several places in Kuttanad with a view to educate the people in improved agricultural methods. The establishment of more experimental farms in unproductive areas was also urged.

Lastly, the Member brought to the notice of Government the need for exempting all canoes used by *bona fide* agriculturists from the operation of the Public Canals and Public Ferries Regulation.

Dewan's reply.— You have spoken on a large number of matters of which I have had no previous notice. I shall, however, try to give you a reply.

In regard to quicklime, it is true that we have given a monopoly for some years in the Kumarakam area, *i. e.*, up to Vaikam. Beyond Vaikam, there is no monopoly. I think the impression is wrong that the monopoly causes hardship to the people, because we have taken care to fix the price of the material. The Director of Agriculture reports that the price in all the places is the same except in Quilon where it has gone up by half a *fanam* per *para*. Government are taking only the middleman's profit, and the arrangement does not affect the ryots prejudicially. If, on the expiry of the current lease, it is found that the ryots suffer, the matter will certainly be reconsidered.

In regard to the maintenance of canals and bunds, it is a matter for which Irrigation Boards should be formed. The Irrigation Regulation has been revised with a view to enable the ryots of Kuttanad also to form such boards, and the Land Revenue Commissioner has been asked to meet the ryots of the locality and submit draft rules. These rules, when received, will be published in the Gazette for public criticism, and then passed eventually. With the subsidy the boards may get from Government the ryots should be able to carry out such works much more promptly than the Department of Public Works.

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